and useful for steel & alloys industry are coal, chromite, bauxite, manganese ore & dolomite.

(b) to (d) Considering the imminent need to provide relief to the people affected by the recent cyclone that has hit the State of Orissa and the adjoining areas, the Central Government in exercise of powers conferred under Section 5A(2) of the Central Excise Act, 1944, vide its Notification dated 02.11.1999 has exempted all excisable goods falling under the First Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985 (5 of 1986) donated or purchased out of cash donations, for charitable purpose in relation to the relief and rehabilitation of the people affected by the cyclone in the State of Orissa, from the whole of duties of Central Excise leviable thereon from subject to the compliance of certain conditions.

Agreement signed with U.S. on quantitative restrictions

*157. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has been signed with the U.S. about early phasing out of quantitative restrictions on certain items;

(b) what are the items that have been shifted from the restricted to the special import licences list; and

(c) what is going to be its impact on our import export trade?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir. India and the United States of America (USA) have reached a bilateral agreement for the determination of reasonable period of time for implementing the rulings and recommendations of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) dated 22nd September, 1999, which had upheld that India's Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) on imports were not justified on Balance-of-Payments (BOP) grounds. The ruling was in the context of a dispute filed by the USA in the WTO on the QRs on imports maintained by India. The reasonable period of time for implementation, as mutually agreed between USA and India will finally expire on 1st April, 2001 by which date the existing QRs on all 1429 tariff lines at the eight digit level will have to be removed by India.

(b) After signing of the above bilateral agreement with USA, no restricted item has yet been shifted to the Special Import Licence list.

(c) Since QRs on these items are still to be lifted, exact impact on trade cannot be quantified. However, it may be noted that out of the 1429 tariff lines on which QRs are to be removed, 685 tariff lines are already importable against Special Import Licence (SIL). Hence, there is unlikely to be any perceptible serious impact on import-export trade in future due to the removal of QRs as were being maintained on BoP grounds.

Industrial and infrastructural investment in Maharashtra

*158. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of industrial and infrastructural investment or intent in Maharashtra during the last four years in comparison with other states;

(b) whether there is a downward trend in the State; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The details of industrial (including infrastructural) investment approved in the non-SSI sector during the last four years for Maharashtra and the country as a whole are as follows:—

Total investment (Domestic & Foreign)

(In Rs. Crore)

Year	Maharashtra	All India
1996-97	21032	148273
1997-98	11954	110929
1998-99	46067	121592
1998-99 (Apr—Dec)	21450	75065
1999-2000 (Apr—Dec)	33267	115657

Industrial investment approvals in Maharashtra follow the All India trend, the industrial investment approvals fell during 1997-98 for the state of Maharashtra and also for the country as a whole. This fall in industrial investment